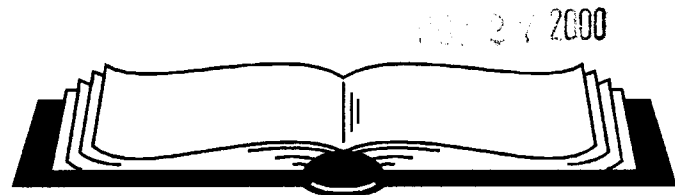


NEW JERSEY**2000-2001****Guidelines and
Application****BEST****PRACTICES****Deadline for Application to County Office:
NOVEMBER 27, 2000**

The Best Practices application is a public document. The information that you provide will serve as the official record. Review the application prior to submission to ensure accuracy and adherence to the guidelines. Type or keyboard information requested on this page and page 2, if applicable.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Category | <u>Citizenship/Character Ed.</u> | (Application is limited to one category. See page 3 for details.) |
| Practice Name | <u>Service Learning</u> | |
| Number of Schools with Practice | <u>1</u> | (If more than one school or district, read and complete information on page 2.) |

| | |
|---|--|
| County | Middlesex |
| District (Proper Name) | Woodbridge Township School District |
| Address | Street/P. O. Box 428 School St., P.O. Box 428 City Woodbridge, NJ 07095 Zip Code |
| Telephone | 732-750-3200 Fax 732-750-3493 Email |
| Chief School Administrator | Kenneth Kuchtyak, Acting Superintendent |
| Nominated School #1 (Proper Name) | John F. Kennedy Memorial High School |
| Address | 200 Washington Ave. Street/P. O. Box City Iselin, NJ 08830 Zip Code |
| Telephone | 732-607-8650 Fax 732-634-1112 Email |
| Principal | Michael A. Cilento |
| Program Developer(s) | Joanne P. Shafer |
| Application Prepared By | Joanne P. Shafer, Department Head & Christina E. Lugo, Teacher |
| Chief School Administrator's or Charter School Lead Person's Signature | <i>[Signature]</i> Vreeland |

| | |
|---|--|
| FOR USE BY COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ONLY | |
| Approved: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | County Superintendent's Signature <i>[Signature]</i> |

**NEW JERSEY
BEST PRACTICES
2000-2001 APPLICATION**

Application Requirements: Failure to comply with the procedures for submission of the application will result in the elimination of the application.

1. **RESPONSES to the information and the statements below must be ANONYMOUS and ACCURATE.** No reference should be made to the names of the district, the school(s) or community. Use the words "the school" or "the schools" in referring to the applicant in responding to the statements
2. **USE ONLY THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE APPLICATION FORM on pages 1, 2 (if applicable), and 4.** Do not include any additional materials, as they will not be reviewed in the selection process.
3. Application must be **keybarded on 8 1/2" x 11" white paper, portrait format. Twelve-point or larger computer font or fourteen-pitch or larger typewritten font must be used.** (This sentence is in twelve-point Times New Roman.)
4. **KEYBARDED RESPONSES** to all the statements below must be **no more than a total of four pages.** Keyboard and number the statement followed by the response. Format your response for accuracy and clarity.
5. **The information on page 4 and the responses to statements must be copied on one side of the page. The information on pages 1 and 2 (if applicable) must be copied on one side of the page.** Staple pages 1, 2 (if applicable), 4, and the keybarded responses together, in that same order.
6. **The original application must be signed by the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person, indicating his/her approval.**
7. **The original and seven copies of the application must be submitted to the county superintendent of schools by November 27, 2000, with the Itemized List of District Applications form.** Keep the seven copies of each application together with the original containing the signature of the district chief school administrator or charter school lead person on the top of each set.

| The following data is required to assist the panelists in the evaluation of the application: | | |
|--|--------------|---|
| Type of School | Grade Levels | Practice Name _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School | _____ | Number of Schools with Practice _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School | _____ | Number of Districts with Practice _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School | _____ | Location <input type="checkbox"/> Urban/City <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban With Urban Characteristics |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High School | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Small City/Town <input type="checkbox"/> Rural |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | _____ | |

| Check the ONE CATEGORY into which the practice best fits. | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Visual and Performing Arts) | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Safe Learning Environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment/Evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> Gifted and Talented Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> School-to-Careers/Workplace Readiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual Education and Diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Physical Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citizenship/Character Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Language Arts Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Support/Guidance and Counseling Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development | <input type="checkbox"/> World Languages |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Engagement | |
| | (family involvement and partnerships with business, community, school districts, and/or higher education) | |

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.
2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*,* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.
3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.
4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

*The 1996 edition of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* published by the New Jersey State Department of Education was disseminated to all districts and charter schools and is available on line through the department's web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education>.

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

Service-Learning is a philosophy and practice that provides meaningful service to the community while improving student learning and fostering civic responsibilities. As part of this program, various classes participate in interdisciplinary Service-Learning projects. Each class performs the aspect of the project that reinforces its curriculum goals while fulfilling a community need. The needs of the community are determined by conducting a Needs Assessment Survey developed by students. In the preparation portion of the project, students are educated in the skills they will need to complete their portion of the project. Then, in the action phase, students use their skills to provide service to the community. Next, students participate in reflection activities. During this phase of the project, students evaluate the personal and civic impact of the project. Finally, each project culminates with a student-prepared celebration involving students, community members, parents, and others involved in the service project. Our school has successfully implemented over fifteen Service-Learning projects, many of which have been a sustained a school-wide effort. Some of our projects include the following: Children's Book Project, Community Blood Drive, Intergenerational Computer Project, Pen Pal Project, *Making Strides Against Breast Cancer* Walk, Metlar-Bodine French Project, ESL Welcome Mat, Spanish Honor Society Make a Difference Day, Seniors Sharing With Seniors, Web Page Design, and the Community Playground Project.

We design our Service-Learning projects to meet the curriculum objectives of individual courses; however, they also share common objectives aligned with the *Corporation for National Service and Learn and Serve America*. Our Service-Learning objectives are as follows:

- To encourage meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations and businesses that will assist in curricular infusion and overall program implementation.
- To provide students with opportunities to explore how academic knowledge and skills can be applied in the workplace and in other settings.
- To increase knowledge and apply skills using Service-Learning as an interdisciplinary approach in service related situations, then reflect upon how they may use these skills in the world of work.
- To use the Service-Learning experience to develop communication, research, and problem-solving skills and to experiment with a variety of roles.
- To promote Service-Learning as an effective teaching strategy which links the Core Curriculum Standards to the educational and human needs of the community.
- To enhance and enrich the academic experiences of students by taking the skills, talents, and experiences from the classroom to the service site and recognize that Service-Learning is a legitimate form of learning that can occur outside the school walls.
- To promote active citizenship and provide opportunities to contribute to the community.

Our first project, the preparation and construction of the Township Community Playground, has provided a paradigm that represents our innovative projects. Our school's Service-Learning projects are innovative because they transform the entire school into a workplace/corporate environment, whereby each academic discipline performs tasks specific to its curriculum. The Community Playground Project was a team effort, including students, faculty, parents, community leaders, newspapers, and local businesses. For example, sociology classes researched the impact of social play on child development. English and journalism classes wrote letters to local businesses and newspapers promoting volunteerism, calling the community to action, and requesting needed supplies. All correspondence was computer processed and mailed by business students. Art and business classes also designed a logo representing the event and applied screen-printing skills to produce t-shirts,

posters, etc., advertising the event. The construction crew included students from all disciplines, parents, residents, tradesmen, and community leaders. Parenting classes provided free childcare for the volunteers. Students reflected on their experiences via class discussions and journal entries. The project culminated in a *Thank You Community Picnic*. The mayor publicly recognized participating students and their contributions. In addition, at a town meeting, the students received a proclamation honoring their accomplishments in the area of Service-Learning. As a result of this and other projects, students have had the opportunity to apply skills gained in the classroom to real-life experiences. Because our projects are performed as part of the curriculum, students receive grades based on the task completed. This allows our District to fulfill its Mission in the classroom and provide our students with a high level of achievement.

2. List the specific *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.

Because many of our school's Service-Learning projects are broad-based and interdisciplinary in nature, several of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* and *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards* are achieved within a given project. Through a fully developed Service-Learning Program, it is feasible to achieve ALL *Core Curriculum Content Standards* and *Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*. Through our combined projects, we have met all Workplace Readiness Standards, Visual and Performing Arts Standards, Health and Physical Education Life Standards, World Language Standards, Language Arts Literacy Standards, and many Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Standards. Below is an overview briefly detailing how many of these standards were met in the Interdisciplinary Children's Book Project.

Students involved in the Children's Book Project collaborated to learn and implement skills that would encourage the development of children's reading skills (WPR 3,4 CCS 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5). The Children's Book Project provided our students with opportunities to reinforce their creative writing (WPR 2, 3, 4 CCS 2.4, 3.2, 3.3) and illustrating (WPR 1, 2 CCS 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 2.4, 3.4, 3.5) skills, as they designed original books for young children and planned a presentation (WPR 3,4,5 CCS 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5) for young audiences. The culminating event for this project was a children's book party, which was hosted by the foods and parenting classes (WPR 1,2, 3, 4, 5 CCS 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 5.6, 5.8), to celebrate and showcase the books created by high school students enrolled in English and art. At the reception, drama students transformed these creative stories into exciting plays as they performed these children's stories for groups of young students in a township elementary school (WPR 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 CCS 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 2.5, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5). The student authors and illustrators donated their books to the elementary school students.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

In many schools, students learn skills that seem disconnected from society. Therefore, one of the educational needs of our students is to recognize the connection between the school and the community as well as the connection between the school and the workplace. Students also need to develop the ability to make connections between skills learned in different content areas. In addition, our students need to enhance their critical-thinking skills in the areas of communication, research, and problem-solving. Finally, our students need to develop appropriate concepts of active citizenship so that they are not just acquiring knowledge from their classes; they are learning appropriate ways to use their learning to give back to the community.

Service-Learning provides an opportunity for students to connect their learning to meaningful, real life situations. This outcome has been assessed in a variety of forms, including oral and written student reflections. For example, after listening to a local veteran's wartime story, one student wrote, "I was definitely touched by the stories and the kindness of the veterans. They were just so welcoming and warm, despite their tragic dealings with the war." Another student offered his analysis of a community problem that he had researched with his classmates: "My group was stunned by the fact that 85% of New Jersey's water is too polluted to swim in, yet we still receive our drinking water from these sources."

In addition to the assessment data generated by student reflections, the school district has developed an assessment component to the Service-Learning manual. This assessment guide provides samples of objective assessment tools that can be used in individual classrooms to assess the extent to which curricular objectives have been met through participation in Service-Learning projects. School records indicate that student participation in Service-Learning has increased from 500 to 600 students over the past year, with approximately 75% of the student body now on board. Correlating with this increase in student participation, students' achievements in basic skills have improved over the past year. Through multiple writing components to Service-Learning projects coupled with a school-wide initiative to increase test scores, Grade 11 HSPT results have dramatically increased. The number of students passing the writing portion of the test increased from 93.5% in 1999 to 97.8% in 2000. Reading performance increased from 90.3% to 95.6% and Mathematics increased from 95.5% to 99.4%.

Feedback from community agencies also indicates a successful Service-Learning program. The development director of the American Cancer Society wrote, "The team spirit of all the teachers and students involved in *Making Strides Against Breast Cancer* is a model of philanthropic generosity and community service in the academic environment." The donor resource representative from The Blood Center of New Jersey states, "It is truly through the efforts of dedicated individuals like yourself and the donors at ...[Name of School] that their needs may be met."

Our community has experienced the positive impact of a successful Service-Learning program at our school, and our students recognize the change as well. One student team responded, "We learned that if our community comes together we can do anything we set our minds to. Nothing you do can be considered insignificant because every little bit helps. And most importantly, people feel better about themselves knowing that they made a difference and helped make our community a better place."

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

The school has been recognized as one of sixty-six Service-Learning Leader Schools nationwide. This role places our school in a unique position to facilitate the replication of the Service-Learning program in other schools and districts. As part of our leadership vision, we have proposed the following programs to promote the replication of the Service-Learning program. First, we have formed a student/faculty/community Service-Learning Council to determine the needs of our community and to generate and implement replicable, inter-disciplinary project ideas. Second, we have formed a partnership among district schools in which representatives from our three high schools engage in joint planning sessions and joint service projects. Third, we will continue to expand our projects to include district elementary and middle schools as well as senior citizens complexes to develop and model intergenerational projects that would be beneficial to all ages. Fourth, we have developed training sessions that can be presented to students and faculty of other schools. Fifth, we have developed inter-community projects in which schools in other districts will be invited to collaborate with our faculty and students to implement Service-Learning projects. Sixth, we have utilized technology (i.e. website and e-mail) to foster statewide, national, and international collaboration.

As detailed above, the Service-Learning program has high potential for replication because there is great support for schools desiring to become involved. Our school would make the following specific recommendations for other schools wishing to develop a Service-Learning program:

- (1) Contact a local Service-Learning leader school to obtain assistance in planning your program and to obtain training and informational literature for interested educators. Leader Schools have experienced the positive impact Service-Learning has in a school and community and will provide direction to facilitate the implementation.
- (2) Select a group of students and a faculty leader to develop and utilize an assessment tool (survey) to determine the needs of your community.
- (3) Based on the community assessment, brainstorm ideas for your school's first project. Leader Schools can also provide ideas for successful projects that can be replicated. Therefore, it may be useful to invite representatives from a leader school to your brainstorming session.
- (4) Have students choose your first project and develop a plan to carry it out. This plan should include the following phases: Preparation, Action, Reflection, and Celebration.
- (5) Select key members from various content areas to support the project's implementation. It is important to include students, parents, faculty, community members, and leaders as part of the project team.
- (6) Carry out your project, beginning with the learning, or Preparation, phase. After Preparation, students are equipped to carry out the Action phase of the project. Have students publicize the project by contacting community groups, submitting press releases to local media, and recognizing student participation. It is important to invite all participants in the previous phases of the project to the culminating Celebration and to engage all participants in meaningful reflection.
- (7) Building on your school's first project, promote enthusiasm for, and increased understanding of, the Service-Learning philosophies and practices. Point out the positive effects of your first Service-Learning project and encourage others to develop their own projects.

The above seven recommendations can serve as a guide for other schools to implement Service-Learning and replicate our successful program. However, a broad-based Service-Learning program should be tailored to the needs and strengths of each school and community.